

KINDNESS TO PARENTS

By: Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim
Translated by : Jalal Abualrub

ففيهما فجاهد

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By

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DARUSSALAM
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In the Name of Allâh
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.' Your Lord knows best what is in your inner selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance." (17:23-25)

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Publishers Note

All the praises and thanks are due to Allâh, the *Rubb* of the worlds, and may Allâh exalt the mention of the Prophet Muhammad, the chosen, the trustworthy, and the mention of his Household and all of his Companions.

'*Kindness to Parents*' is very enlightening booklet by Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim, a renowned religious scholar and an expert of Arabic language. Kindness to Parents and relatives is lightly recommended in Islam.

Islam is the greatest favor of Allâh with which He has distinguished humankind to pay his or her duty in all aspects of Islamic culture, especially about parents and relatives. There are many *Ayât* and *Ahadith* (sayings of the Prophet ﷺ) and good advices from the *Salaf* that it is the duty of every Muslim to value his or her parents and encourage to pay respect to them. This cannot be accomplished without understanding all the aspects of religion, which should be based on the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. Allâh says:

> "Give thanks to Me and to your parents." (31:14)

In addition, He said:

> "And say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.'" (17:24)

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

> "There are three types of supplications that will not be rejected (by Allâh): the supplication of the parent with regards to his offspring, the supplication of a fasting person and the supplication of a traveler." (*Sahih Al-Jâmi'*)

From our *Salaf*, Mujahid also commented:

> "If the parents grow old and end up urinating and answering the call of nature on themselves, do not feel disgusted or say *Uff* to them. Rather, remove the urine and feces from them, just as they used to do when you were young without feeling disgust in doing that for you."

In view of its importance, Darussalam has rendered this booklet into the English language with prior permission from the author. Brother Jalal Abualrub accepted the task of translation, and performed it very well.

Finally, I am grateful to all brothers who have contributed in bringing about this valuable book. May Allâh accept our sincere efforts regarding the propagation of His religion throughout the world —*Âmin*!

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager

Introduction

All thanks are due to Allâh, Who has created everything, and then proportioned it, and Who has measured preordainments for everything and then guided mankind the right as well as the wrong paths. And may Allâh's peace and blessings be on the most honorable Prophet and Messenger, who perfectly fulfillled his mission in statement, deed, good conduct and kindness.

In obedience to the Command of Allâh, the Exalted and Ever-High, the believers are to help each other in righteousness and piety, as well as give sincere advice to all Muslims. Therefore, I dedicated to the commandment that Allâh gave to His slaves to be kind, forbearing, generous, obedient and dutiful to their parents.

In this book, I collected several stories and narrations that demonstrate the kindness and *Birr* (being dutiful) of our righteous *Salaf*[1] towards their parents, and their striving hard to satisfy their parents' needs and necessities, in obedience to Allâh's worship in sincerity.

Between the lines contained in this book, there is a kind word, a sigh of pain from a bleeding heart and a hot tear that falls down the cheek. Adding to the power of this subject and the soft emotions it stirs, I included several of the honorable *Ahadith* that should soften the heart, dissolve hardness, dissipate heedlessness and give parents

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[1] The *Salaf* are the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, the *Tabi'in* (second generation) and the *Tabb Tabi'in* (third generation of Islam), the best people as the Prophet ﷺ described them in authentic *Ahadith*.

their due honor and respect. This book also exposes the shortcoming and error of many among us who do not preserve the rights of their parents.

We ask Allâh to extend our delight in our parents' life, raise their grades, elevate their status, reward them generously, grant them dwelling in the High Paradise, and gather us and them in the Garden of Eden. In it, there is what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no heart has ever imagined of delights.

Abdul-Malik bin Muhammad
Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Qasim

Dutiful to your Parents

Allâh, the Exalted and the Most Honored said in His Noble Qur'ân:

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَـٰنًا ۚ إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِندَكَ ٱلْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَآ أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُل لَّهُمَآ أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُل لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ○ وَٱخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ ٱلذُّلِّ مِنَ ٱلرَّحْمَةِ وَقُل رَّبِّ ٱرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِى صَغِيرًا ○ رَّبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِى نُفُوسِكُمْ ۚ إِن تَكُونُوا۟ صَـٰلِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُۥ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّٰبِينَ غَفُورًا﴾ [الإسراء: ٢٣-٢٥]

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them *Uff* ('Fie', a word of disrespect), nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young." Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance." (17:23-25)

Ad-Daylami narrated that Al-Husain bin 'Ali رضي الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«لَوْ عَلِمَ اللهُ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْعُقُوقِ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ (أُفٍّ) لَحَرَّمَهُ».

"Has there been an act of '*Uquq*[1] less than saying '*Uff*' (Fie), Allâh would have disallowed it as well."

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[1] '*Uquq*, here pertains to disrespectful, unkind and undutiful

Furthermore, Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما commented on the meaning of Allâh's Statement:

﴿ فَلَا تَقُل لَّهُمَآ أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنۡهَرۡهُمَا ﴾

"...say not to them *'Fie'* nor shout at them..."

'Fie' is a word that demonstrates dislike (to do something the parents asked, or disliking an odor that comes from any of them, and so forth.), while Muqâtil said that this *Âyah* pertains to disrespectful rude words.

It is also said that a child, no matter how old he or she becomes, is never allowed to say: '*Uff* (Fie),' if he smells a bad odor coming from his parents or one of them. Consequently, all that represents a greater disrespect sternly disallowed.

Mujahid also commented:

> "If the parents grow old and end up urinating and answering the call of nature on themselves, do not feel disgusted or say: *Uff* to them. Rather, remove the urine and feces from them, just as they used to do when you were young without feeling disgust in doing that for you."

Urwah bin Az-Zubair commented on Allâh's Statement:

﴿ وَٱخۡفِضۡ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ ٱلذُّلِّ مِنَ ٱلرَّحۡمَةِ ﴾

> "And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy." (17:24)

"Its means, one should not deny his parents any request." [1]

Allâh said:

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treatment of parents.

[1] *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, vol. 5, p. 259

﴿ وَقُل رَّبِّ ٱرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِى صَغِيرًا ﴾

"And say: My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young." (17:24)

In this *Âyah*, Allâh specifically mentioned rearing or bringing up, so that children remember the tremendous kindness and care their parents had while rearing them, might that they feel pity and kindness towards their parents.

We should mention that Allâh has disallowed invoking Him for forgiveness for dead disbelievers. Therefore, if the parents of a Muslim were Christians or Jews, he or she must deal with them in the manner that Allâh ordained, except invoking Him for mercy for them if they died while still disbelievers.[1]

Imam Abu Bakr Al-Jassâs said:

> "If a Muslim's parents die while disbelievers, he should wash them, follow their funeral and bury them. This is included in Allâh's Command to behave with them kindly." [2]

Allâh has emphasized the rights of parents when He said:

﴿ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ ﴾ [البقرة : ٨٣]

> "And (remember) when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none but Allâh (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans and *Al-Masâkîn* (the poor)." (2:83)

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1 *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, vol. 10, p, 244

2 *Ahkâm-ul-Qur'ân*, by Al-Jassâs, vol. 2, p. 236

Ibn Kathir commented on the meaning of this *Âyah*:

"Allâh has commanded the Children of Israel to worship Him Alone and shun associating anyone or anything in His worship. This He has commanded all of His creation, as well, and this is why He created them. Verily, the highest and greatest right, is Allâh's Right that none except Him is worshipped. After that comes the rights of creation, especially and most importantly, rights of parents. For instance, Allâh said:

﴿ أَنِ ٱشْكُرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَيْكَ ﴾ [لقمان : ١٤]

"Give thanks to Me and to your parents." (31:14) [1]

Allâh has also praised the Prophets, especially Prophet Yahya (John) عليه السلام, because he was kind to his parents in their old age. Surely, kindness in time of need is greater than at other times, and there is a great need that occurs and arises in old age and a tremendous weakness that it brings:

﴿ وَبَرًّۢا بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُن جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴾ [مريم : ١٤]

"And (Prophet John was) dutiful towards his parents, and he was neither arrogant nor disobedient (to Allâh or to his parents)." (19:14)

Further, Allâh praised Jesus عليه السلام, because he was dedicated to serving his mother, as well as, being merciful towards her. He mentioned this fact himself, when he said:

﴿ وَبَرًّۢا بِوَٰلِدَتِى وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِى جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴾ [مريم : ٣٢]

"And dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest." (19:32)

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[1] *Mukhtasar Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 1, p. 30

We surely have a good example in Allâh's Prophets and our righteous ancestors (the *Salaf*, with regards to kindness to parents). For instance, the father of the Prophets, Ibrahim (Abraham) عليه السلام, was very kind in the way he called his father to Allâh. Even when his father said harsh words to him, Ibrahim عليه السلام said kind words and promised that he would invoke Allâh to forgive him. Allâh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَّبِيًّا ○ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنكَ شَيْئًا ○ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ○ يَا أَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ عَصِيًّا ○ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَٰنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ○ قَالَ أَرَاغِبٌ أَنتَ عَنْ آلِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا ○ قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا ○ وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُو رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ﴾ [مريم: ٤١-٤٨]

"And mention in the Book (the Qur'ân) Ibrâhîm (Abraham). Verily, he was a man of truth, a Prophet. When he said to his father: 'O my father! Why do you worship that which hears not, sees not and cannot avail you in anything? O my father! Verily, there has come to me of the knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me, I will guide you to the Straight Path. O my father! Worship not *Shaitân* (Satan). Verily, *Shaitân* (Satan) has been a rebel against the Most Gracious (Allâh). O my father! Verily, I fear lest a torment from the Most Gracious (Allâh) should overtake you, so that you become a companion of *Shaitân* (Satan) (in the Hell-fire).' He (the father) said: 'Do you reject my

gods, O Ibrâhîm (Abraham)? If you stop not (this), I will indeed stone you. So get away from me safely (before I punish you).' Ibrâhîm (Abraham) said: 'Peace be on you! I will ask forgiveness of my Lord for you. Verily, He is unto me Ever Most Gracious. And I shall turn away from you and from those whom you invoke besides Allâh. And I shall call upon my Lord and I hope that I shall not be unblest in my invocation to my Lord.'" (19:41-47)

As for our righteous *Salaf*, let us mention Owais Al-Qarani. Asir bin Jâbir رضى الله عنه narrated: When people from Yemen would come (to Al-Madinah), 'Umar رضى الله عنه would ask them, "Is Owais Al-Qarani among you?" He was told who Owais was and Umar رضى الله عنه asked him, "Are you Owais bin 'Amir?" He said, "Yes." 'Umar رضى الله عنه asked, "From the sub-tribe of Murad, from the tribe of Qaran?" Owais said, "Yes." 'Umar رضى الله عنه asked, "You had leukoderma that was cured, but left a mark the size of a dirham?" He said, "Yes." 'Umar رضى الله عنه asked, "You have a surviving mother?" He said, "Yes." 'Umar رضى الله عنه said, "I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ say:

«يَأْتِي عَلَيْكُمْ أُوَيْسُ بْنُ عَامِرٍ مَعَ أَمْدَادِ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ مِنْ مُرَادٍ، ثُمَّ مِنْ قَرَنٍ، كَانَ بِهِ بَرَصٌ فَبَرَأَ مِنْهُ إِلَّا مَوْضِعَ دِرْهَمٍ، لَهُ وَالِدَةٌ هُوَ بِهَا بَرٌّ. لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللهِ لَأَبَرَّهُ، فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرَ لَكَ فَافْعَلْ»

'Owais bin 'Âmir will come to you with the people of Yemen, from the sub-tribe of Murad, from the tribe of Qaran. He used to suffer from leukoderma and was cured from it, except an area the size of a dirham (a coin), and he has a mother to whom he is dutiful. If he swears that Allâh does something, Allâh will fulfilll his vow for him. Therefore, if you could ask him to invoke Allâh to forgive you, then do so.'

Therefore, invoke Allâh to forgive me," and Owais did. 'Umar رضى الله عنه asked him, "Where are you headed to?" He said, "To Kufah (in Iraq)." 'Umar رضى الله عنه said, "Should I write to its governor as a recommendation for you?" Owais said, "No, for it is better for me to be among the commoners.' In the next year, one of the chiefs of Owais' tribe performed *Hajj* and 'Umar رضى الله عنه asked him about Owais. He said that he left him living in poor accommodations and having little furniture. 'Umar رضى الله عنه said, "I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ say:

«يَأْتِي عَلَيْكُمْ أُوَيْسُ بْنُ عَامِرٍ مَعَ أَمْدَادِ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ مِنْ مُرَادٍ، ثُمَّ مِنْ قَرَنٍ، كَانَ بِهِ بَرَصٌ فَبَرَأَ مِنْهُ إِلَّا مَوْضِعَ دِرْهَمٍ، لَهُ وَالِدَةٌ هُوَ بِهَا بَرٌّ. لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللهِ لَأَبَرَّهُ، فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرَ لَكَ فَافْعَلْ».

'Owais bin Amir will come to you with some people from Yemen, from the tribe of Murad, from the tribe of Qaran. He used to suffer from leukoderma and was cured from it, except an area the size of a dirham. He has a mother to whom he is kind. If he swears that Allâh should do something, Allâh will fulfill his vow for him. Therefore, if you could ask him to invoke Allâh to forgive you, then do so."

So that man went back to Owais and asked him to invoke Allâh to forgive him, and Owais asked, 'Have you met 'Umar رضى الله عنه?" That man answered in the affirmative, and Owais invoked Allâh to forgive him. The people came to know this quality of Owais, prompting him to disappear from that city. (*Muslim*)

The scholars of Islam have agreed that being dutiful to parents is necessary, even though their statements to this

effect took several forms. For instance, Ibn Hazm said that kindness to parents is an obligatory act. In, *Al-Âdab Al-Kubra*, Qadi 'Iyâd was reported to have said:

> "Being dutiful to parents is an obligation, except when a prohibition is involved."[1]

They used as evidence several authentic and clear proofs. For instance, Allâh said:

﴿ ۞ وَٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا۟ بِهِۦ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَـٰنًا ﴾

[النساء : ٣٦]

> "Worship none but Allâh Alone and be dutiful and good to parents." (4:36)

This *Âyah* ordains an obligatory act (to be dutiful to parents), which Allâh mentioned here along with worshipping Him in *Tauhid* (Islamic Monotheism), and there is no proof that removes it from the grade of obligatory acts to lesser grades. Therefore, being dutiful to parents is required, necessary and obligatory on mankind.

Also Allâh said:

﴿ ۞ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَـٰنًا ۚ ﴾ [الإسراء : ٢٣]

> "And your Lord has *Qada* that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents." (17:23)

Qada means, according to Ibn Kathir, 'decreed,' while Al-Qurtubi said it means, 'ordered, commanded and made necessary.' Ash-Shaukani commented on this *Âyah*:

> "Mentioning being dutiful to parents along with worshipping Allâh Alone in Monotheism emphasizes

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[1] *Ghidhâ'-ul-Albâb*, vol. 1, p. 382

the rights of parents and the significance of *Birr* (being dutiful) towards them." [1]

Meaning of *Birr* towards Parents

The word *Birr* means here 'dutiful[2] and having good conduct', as indicated by the Prophet's statement:

«الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ».

"*Birr* is good conduct."

Regarding parents and relatives, *Birr* pertains to the opposite of '*Uquq*, which pertains to disrespect and disregarding rights.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said:

> "*Birr* towards parents entails obeying their orders, except when what they order is in disobedience of Allâh. In contrast, '*Uquq* entails neglecting parents and withholding one's kindness from them." [3]

Furthermore, Al-Qurtubi said:

> "*Uquq* against parents pertains to unfulfillling their needs and requirements that are within their rights, while *Birr* pertains to fulfillling these needs and requirements. Therefore, if the parents or one of them order their offspring to do something, it is necessary to ob\ey their order as long as what they order does not contain disobedience (of Allâh)." [4]

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1 *Fathul-Qadir*, vol. 3, p. 218

2 'Dutiful' is one of the meanings of the word *Birr*, which generally pertain to righteousness.

3 *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, vol. 5, p 259

4 *Al-Jâmi' li- Ahkâm-ul-AQur'ân*, vol. 6, p. 238

Moreover, Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyyah said:

"Abu Bakr said in his book, *Zad-ul-Musâfir*, 'Whoever made his parents angry and brought tears to them, is required to go back and make them laugh.' This indicates that it is necessary to obey parents with regards to permissible things too. Therefore, whatever they command should be fulfillled and whatever they disallow should be avoided, if all this brings their benefit and does not harm their child, including ending travel plans and staying with them if they wished that.'" [1]

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ asking his permission to take part in *Jihâd*. The Prophet ﷺ asked him:

«أَحَيٌّ وَالِدَاكَ»؟.

"Are your parents alive?"

He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet ﷺ said to him:

«فَفِيهِمَا فَجَاهِدْ».

"Then exert yourself in their service." (*Sahih Al-Bukhâri*)

Al-Jassâs commented in *Ahkâm-ul-Qur'ân*:

"It is not permitted for a man to participate in *Jihâd* without permission from his parents, when there are enough soldiers to resist the enemy. However, if there are not sufficient Muslim soldiers to repel enemy forces, then one has to join the *Jihâd* without permission from his parents. In this case, *Jihâd* becomes an obligation on all those able Muslim men, a *Fard 'Ayn*, as compared to a *Fard Kifâyah*, when at least a part of the *Ummah* is to fulfilll the

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[1] *Ghidha'-ul-Albâb*, vol. 1, p. 382

obligation."[1]

Imam An-Nawawi said in his commentary on the *Sahih* collection by Imam Muslim: "Abu Muhammad bin Abdus-Salam said, 'It is not allowed for a man to participate in *Jihâd* without permission from his parents, because it makes them anxious when they think that he might be killed or maimed, in addition to feeling utterly depressed because of this possibility.'"

Also, Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said:

"There are three *Âyât* that are tied to three things, and they are inseparable."

He mentioned among them the *Âyah*:

﴿ أَنِ ٱشْكُرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَيْكَ ﴾ [لقمان : ١٤]

"...give thanks to Me and to your parents. (31:14)"

And then commented:

"Whoever thanked Allâh, but did not appreciate his parents, then (his thanking Allâh) would not be accepted from him. This is why the Prophet ﷺ said:

«رِضَا الرَّبِّ مِنْ رِضَا الْوَالِد، وَسَخَطُ الرَّبِّ مِن سَخَطِ الْوَالِدِ».

'The Lord's Pleasure is connected to the parents' pleasure, and the Lord's Anger is connected to the parents' anger.'"[2]

In several of his honorable *Ahadith*, the Prophet ﷺ has commanded that the parents be obeyed. For instance, Abu Ad-Dardâ' said, "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ commanded me to do nine things:

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1 *Ahkâm-ul-Qur'ân*, by Al-Jassâs, vol. 4, p. 235

2 *Kitâbul-Kabâir*, p. 40

«لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللهِ شَيْئًا، وَإِنْ قُطِّعْتَ أَوْ حُرِّقْتَ، وَلَا تَتْرُكَنَّ الصَّلَاةَ الْمَكْتُوبَةَ مُتَعَمِّدًا، وَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا مُتَعَمِّدًا بَرِئَتْ مِنْهُ الذِّمَّةُ، وَلَا تَشْرَبَنَّ الْخَمْرَ فَإِنَّهَا مِفْتَاحُ كُلِّ شَرٍّ، وَأَطِعْ وَالِدَيْكَ وَإِنْ أَمَرَاكَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنْ دُنْيَاكَ فَاخْرُجْ لَهُمَا. . .»

'Associate none with Allâh in worship, even if you are maimed or burnt (i.e. tortured). Do not abandon the compulsory prayer by intention, for whoever abandons prayer by intention will have lost ties of *Dimmah* (that sanctify one's blood and property). Do not drink alcohol, for it is the key to all evils. Obey your parents even if they command you to forfeit your property...'" (*Al-bukhâri*)

Also, Muhammad bin Ali said: The worst children are those whose shortcomings lead them to '*Uquq*, while the worst parents are those who exaggerate in their *Birr*.[1] Allâh has warned parents against the trial that their offspring represent for them:

﴿ إِنَّمَآ أَمْوَٰلُكُمْ وَأَوْلَٰدُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ﴾ [التغابن: ١٥]

"Your wealth and your children are only a trial." (64:15)

And did not recommend the parents to use *Birr* with their children. However, Allâh commanded the offspring to use *Birr* with their parents.

There are two reasons why the Qur'ân did not explicitly command parents to be kind to their children: First: due to the mercy that Allâh has installed in the heart of the

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1 They do not command their children to pray, or agree to their children committing sins, out of love for their children, so they claim, and so forth

parents (towards their children).

Second: the offspring is but some of their parents, prompting the former to feel kindness and affection to the latter. Furthermore, it is a wonderful fact of life that all living creatures in existence, even beasts of prey, have some kind of parental affection towards their offspring.

In Islam, parents earn rewards for their tiresome efforts in striving hard to support and rear their offspring. Likewise, children earn rewards for helping, serving and bringing pleasure and comfort to their parents. Ka'b bin 'Ujrah narrated:

> "A man passed by the Prophet ﷺ, and the Companions were amazed at his eagerness and vigor (seeking his means of livelihood). They said, 'O Allâh's Messenger! Might that this vitality be spent in Allâh's Cause.' The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ replied:
>
> «إِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَى عَلَىٰ وَلَدِهِ صِغَارًا فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَىٰ عَلَى أَبَوَيْنِ شَيْخَيْنِ كَبِيرَيْنِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، وإِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَىٰ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ يُعِفُّهَا فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَىٰ رِيَاءً وَمُفاخَرَةً فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ الشَّيْطَانِ».
>
> 'If he went out to earn what he supports his young children with, then he is in the Cause of Allâh. If he went out to support two elderly parents, then he is in the Cause of Allâh. If he went out to support himself and preserve his honor (such as from begging people, etc.), then he is in the Cause of Allâh. If he went out for the purpose of showing-off and pride, then he is in the cause of Satan.'" (*At-Tabarani*)

Furthermore, 'Âishah رضى الله عنها said:

"A woman came to me with her two daughters to ask me for help, but I only had one date which I gave her. She took the date, divided it to two halves between her daughters, but she did not eat any part of it, then went out with them. When the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ came, I told him the story of this woman and he said:

«مَنِ ابْتُلِيَ مِنَ الْبَنَاتِ بِشَيْءٍ فَأَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهِنَّ كُنَّ لَهُ سِتْرًا مِنَ النَّارِ» .

'Whoever was tested with having daughters and treated them kindly, then they will be a shield for him (or her) from the Fire.'" (*Al-Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

Moreover, Abdullah bin Abu Aufa narrated:

"A man said, 'O Allâh's Messenger! There is a young man who is dying and is commanded to recite *Lâ ilâha illallâh* (none has the right to be worshipped except Allâh), and the *Sunnah* is that those who are dying are commanded to recite this Testimonial), but he is unable to recite it.' The Prophet ﷺ went to the young man and ordered him, 'Say: *Lâ ilâha illallâh*!' He replied, 'I cannot.' The Prophet ﷺ asked him why and he said, 'My heart is sealed; every time I want to recite it, my heart prevented from doing so.' The Prophet ﷺ asked him, 'Why?' The young man said, 'Because of my *'Uquq* (undutiful treatment) towards my mother.' The Prophet ﷺ sent for her and asked her, 'What if I command that a great fire is started and you were asked to invoke Allâh to forgive your son, or else he will be thrown in it?' She said, 'In that case, I will invoke Allâh for him, O Allâh's Messenger!' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Then bear witness to Allâh and then

> to me that you have forgiven him.' She said, 'I bear witness to You (O Allâh) and then to Your Messenger that I have forgiven my son.' The Prophet ﷺ said to the young man, 'Say: *Lâ ilâha illallâh*!' That man said, '*Lâ ilâha illallâhu Wahdahu la Sharika lahu* (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh, Alone without partners.' The Prophet ﷺ said thrice, 'All praise is due to Allâh for saving you from the Fire.'" (*At-Tabarâni*)

And with regards to the virtue of serving and being dutiful to parents, Ibn 'Abbâs رضى الله عنهما said:

> "Allâh opens two doors (to Paradise) for every Muslim who is dutiful to his (or her) two Muslim parents, awaiting the reward with Allâh Alone, and one door if he (or she) had one surviving parent (to whom he or she is dutiful). Furthermore, if one makes one of his parents angry, then Allâh will not be pleased with him until his parent forgives him." He was asked, "Even if they were unjust to their child?" He said, "Even if they were unjust.'" (*Al-Baihaqi*)

How great and excellent Allâh's Favor and Mercy are! Allâh opens a door in Paradise that is connected to dutiful treatment of each parent. Whenever adult children go out of their homes to earn a living for their parents, Allâh opens this door to its goodness for them and His mercy descends on them, as long as they are pleasing their parents. If the child makes his parents or one of them angry, Allâh becomes angry with him or her and closes the door to Paradise. It is the same case even if one was treated unfairly by his parents, so that children are taught that they are subservient to their parents.

Another aspect of parental rights, is that Allâh's Commandment to be dutiful to them encompasses their orders and requests that please their children and those that do not please them as well, and their children are not to complain or argue about any request their parents make. This is a very important fact that most children ignore, thinking that being dutiful to parents is only in what suits them and satisfies their desires or opinion. In short, children are required to be kind and dutiful to parents even when they do not like what the parents demand from them, and this is a part of the general meaning of the word *Birr*.

There are three elements that pertain to *Birr*:

First, the child should prefer the pleasure of his parents to his own pleasure and the pleasure of his wife, children and all other people (except the Prophet ﷺ).

Second, the child should obey his or her parents in all what they order him or her to do or not to do, even when what they demand is not suitable in their children's opinion, unless they command to disobey Allâh the Exalted.

Third, the child should willingly and with a good heart, grant his parents what he thinks they like or prefer even before they ask for it, all the while feeling and admitting that he has not reached perfection in fulfillling their tremendous rights on him.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ لَا تُرَدُّ: دَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ لِوَلَدِهِ، وَدَعْوَةُ الصَّائِمِ، وَدَعْوَةُ الْمُسَافِرِ»

"There are three types of supplications that will not be rejected (by Allâh): the supplication of the parent with regards to his offspring, the supplication of a

fasting person and the supplication of a traveler." (*Sahih Al-Jâmi'*, *Hadith* No. 3029)

If *Birr* towards parents only brings their invoking Allâh for their child, it will be sufficient and worthy of directing their children to eternal happiness, Allâh willing. Furthermore, Allâh stated that He shall accept the righteous works of those who are dutiful to their parents, when He said:

﴿ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنۡهُمۡ أَحۡسَنَ مَا عَمِلُواْ وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَن سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمۡ ﴾

[الأحقاف: ١٦]

"They are those from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evil deeds." (46:16)

Therefore, Allâh combines granting His mercy and forgiveness of sins as rewards for *Birr* towards parents.

The blessing of having righteous Parents

The mercy and affection that the parent has for his or her children does not need explanation or declaration. As soon as one becomes a parent, his or her mercy, affection, kindness, care, dedication and love towards their children begins. Before that, and as Islam requires, the righteous man looks for a righteous wife who will be the source of affection, wisdom and righteous upbringing of their offspring together, thus, building a righteous family that is the basic ingredient in the building of the righteous Muslim Society. Furthermore, religious children who were brought up by religious parents, are worthy of being kind and of keeping good relations with their relatives, while the sinners are the farthest among people from righteousness, keeping relations with their kin and *Birr* in general.

However, one's loving and caring for his or her children should never direct him or her to disregard Allâh's Rights or to be lenient with children where they should be firm.

Once, Caliph Hishâm bin Abdul-Malik did not see his son among those attending the Friday prayer and questioned him about it, and his son replied that his mule could not carry him. Hisham said to him:

> "But you could have walked." Hishâm forbade his son from riding an animal for a year, during which he had to walk to the Friday prayer.[1]

This is a method of discipline that our ancestors used with their children, so that they would become aright, adhere by

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1 *Al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah*, vol. 9, p. 396

the truth and fulfilll their Islamic duties and responsibilities.

Another aspect of beneficial parenthood occurs when silence overcomes the world at night when parents stand before the Hands of Allâh and invoke Him for the benefit of their children. Hishâm bin Hassan said that Sa'id bin Jubair said to him:

> "I perform longer prayers for the benefit of this son of mine." Hishâm commented, "He hoped that Allâh will protect his son for him this way." [1]

When Mâlik bin Dinâr saw a man pray improperly, he said:

> "I feel pity for his children!" He was asked, "He does not pray properly and you feel pity for his children?" Mâlik said, "He is their chief (or teacher) and they learn from him!"[2]

This demonstrates the pivotal role parents play in the way their children treat them in the future, whether they rear them righteously and carefully, invoke Allâh for them and protect them from all evils. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Muslim father and mother to protect their children from the punishment Allâh has prepared for *'Uquq* of the parents, by being righteous themselves and teaching their children the means and ways of *Birr* in general and towards parents in particular. They are required to rear their children righteously, teach them Allâh's set limits and warn them against the ways and methods that lead to His anger and displeasure. By implementing this method, parents will also help their children in being kind to them

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1 *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 4, p. 279

2 *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol 3, p. 287

later on in their life. For instance, Al-Ghazzali said:

> "Parents should help their children in being kind to them, by refraining from requiring from them what they cannot bear and insisting on things when their children are bored (or tired), for fear that they might disobey them and thus earn the Fire." [1]

It was said that your child is with you seven years as a prisoner, another seven years as a prince and another seven as a minister. [2]

Moreover, Muhammad bin Hâtib said that he heard Abdullah bin 'Umar, may Allâh be pleased with them both, say to a man, "Discipline your children, for you will be asked about what you teach them, while they will be responsible for being dutiful and obedient to you." Therefore, children are a trust kept with their parents. Their hearts are just like a valued precious stone that does not have any inscription on it and is ready to accept any and all imprint. If children are taught righteous behavior, they will grow up the same and earn the happiness of this life and the Hereafter.

Also when the parents are righteous, the benefit of their righteousness will reach their children, as demonstrated by Allâh's Statement:

﴿ وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا ﴾ [الكهف : ٨٢]

"... and their father was a righteous man." (18:82)

It was said that the father mentioned in the *Âyah* was their

1 *Tanbihul-Ghâfilin*, p. 98

2 *Al-Barakah fi Fadl as-Sa'i wal-Harakah*, p. 98

seventh or tenth grandfather.[1]

As we stated, love of children should not lead any parent to disregard Allâh's Rights or the rights of Allâh's creation in favor of his or her children. A son of Sharih bin Al-Harith said to him:

> "There is a dispute between me and some people. Please judge in this case, so that if I have the right I take them to the judge, or else I settle the dispute with them."

He explained the details of the dispute to his father, who advised that he should take the dispute to the authorities. His son implemented his advice, went to the authorities with his dispute and lost the case. He went back to his father and said to him, "By Allâh! Had I not asked you to advise me, I would not have gone ahead with the dispute (to the judge) and lost it." Sharih said:

> "By Allâh, my son, you are dearer to me than the earth's fill like them. However, Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored, is dearer to me than you are. I did not tell you that your case is weak for fear that you might try to settle it with them and in the process eat up some of their rights.'" [2]

Birr towards parents also includes the way one walks along with them, as demonstrated by this story: Abu Ghassân Adh-Dhabbi went out walking in front of his father in Al-Madinah and Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه caught up with him and asked him:

> "Who is that man walking behind you?" He said,

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1 *Fathul-Qadir*, vol. 3, p. 304

2 *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3, p. 40

"My father." Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه said, "You have missed correctness and contradicted the *Sunnah*. Do not walk in front of your father, only behind him or to his right and do not let any one separate between you and him (while walking). Do not take a bone that has meat on it, which your father looked at, for he might have wanted it. Do not look straight at your father, do not sit until he sits and do not sleep until he goes to sleep." (*At-Tabarâni*)

Appreciating the Mother and Father

Islam legislates that Muslims should appreciate the virtue and rights of creation who grant them favors, especially and foremost the mother who endures hardships after hardships and strives hard in the service and rearing of her children. Also, the father strives hard to rear his children, filling their life with love and care, spending on them and supporting them financially and emotionally. Moreover, admitting to the favors one receives is made more perfect by striving hard to return the favor in kind. In contrast, one's ignorance in and neglect of the rights of those who grant him favors, are some of the worst characteristics there are, especially the case if one adds to it returning the favor with evil.[1]

Abu Al-Laith said:

"If the offspring becomes righteous and his or her parents teach him or her religious knowledge and the Qur'ân, they will collect as much rewards as that the offspring collects, without decreasing from the rewards of the offspring. Consequently, if parents do not teach their offspring the Qur'ân and instead teach

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1 *Birru Al-Wâlidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 27

him or her the way of sin, the parents will collect as much sin as that collected by the offspring without decreasing the offspring's evil burden."[1]

Indeed, Allâh has sternly warned against neglecting rearing the children righteously, when He said:

﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلْحِجَارَةُ ﴾ [التحريم: ٦]

"O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones." (66:6)

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ indicated that one's children will dispute with him on the Day of Resurrection if the parent had neglected teaching and rearing them righteously. For instance, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«كُلُّكُمْ راعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، الإمَامُ راعٍ، وَمَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِي أَهْلِه وَمَسؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ...».

"All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care. The *Imâm* (i.e. ruler) is the guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them and a man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for them." (*Al-Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

Moreover, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَمِل بِهِ، أُلْبِسَ وَالِدَاهُ تَاجًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، ضَوْءُهُ أَحْسَنُ مِنْ ضَوْءِ الشَّمْسِ فِي بُيُوتِ الدُّنْيَا، فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِالَّذِي عَمِلَ

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[1] *Tanbih-ul-Ghâfilin*, p. 99

بِهَذَا».

"He who reads the Qur'ân and adheres by it, then his parents will be granted crowns to wear on the Day of Resurrection; the light of these crowns is more bright than the sun's light in the houses of this world! What do you think then of those wearing the crowns?"[1]

Further, and as we mentioned before, the parents should invoke Allâh for their children and strive hard to be a good example for them:

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَٰجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَٱجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا﴾ [الفرقان: ٧٤]

"And those who say: 'Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders of the *Muttaqûn* (the pious).'" (25:74)

For instance, 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz has set a good example for his son and for all Muslims after him. When he was told that a son of his bought a ring for a thousand dirhams, he wrote to him:

"I was told that you bought a ring that cost a thousand dirhams. So when you receive this letter, sell the ring and fill a thousand stomachs (with food bought) with that money. Then buy a ring for two dirhams that has a core of iron and have the following words in scripted on it, 'May Allâh grant His Mercy to he who knows the limits of his own self.'"[2]

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1 *Jami'-ul-Usul*, p. 82

2 *Madârij-us-Sâlikin*, vol. 2, p. 345

Another aspect of righteous parenting, is that Allâh will protect one's children after he or she dies, if they were brought up to be good Muslims and servants of Allâh. Abu Hâzim Salamah bin Dinâr passed by Abu Ja'far Al-Madini, who was sad at the time, and asked him:

> "Why are you sad? But if you wish, I would tell you why." Abu Ja'far said, "Tell me why." Abu Hâzim said, "Have you thought about what would happen to your children after you?" Abu Ja'far said, "Yes." Abu Hâzim said, "Do not do that, for if they are *Auliyâ'* (supporters, loyalists) of Allâh, then do not even fear for their well-being. If they are enemies of Allâh, then do not worry about what will happen to them after you." [1]

Parents fear Allâh's punishment might touch their Children

Abu Hayyân At-Taymi said:

> "I saw Majma' At-Taymi cry at his son's funeral, and I asked why he cried. He said, 'I feel grief for my loss, just as any parent would feel, and I cry because I do not know if he will end up in Paradise or the Fire.'"[2]

This is how concerned and worried one should be concerning his children's well-being and the fate they would face after they die, for this life is short and the eternal life is there, in the dwelling of eternity. May Allâh make us, our parents and our offspring among those who dwell and gather in Paradise forever.

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1 *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 3, p. 232

2 *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 5, p. 90

Righteous parents grieve for losing their righteous children, but observe patience and await Allâh's Reward for it

Kathir bin Tamim Ad-Darri said:

> "I was sitting with Sa'id bin Jubair when his son Abdullah came by, and Abdullah had good religious knowledge. Sa'id said, 'If Abdullah dies, I will be patient and await the reward for it (with Allâh).'"[1]

Further, Silah bin Ashiam was participating in a battle along with his son and said to him:

> "My son! Fight, so that you achieve martyrdom and I await Allâh's reward for patience." His son fought courageously and was killed in that battle.[2]

By encouraging his son to fight, Silah wanted to collect the reward of patience for his martyrdom, in addition to the reward that his son will collect from being killed for Allâh's Cause. We should therefore ask ourselves if we rear our children to waste time and spend it in play and jest, thus, being instrumental in producing a heedless insignificant nation. Or, do we rear them to be honorable, teach them religious knowledge and raise them to love Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ and participate in *Jihâd* in Allâh's Cause, so that our *Ummah* becomes mighty and its flags are raised high?

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[1] *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 4, p. 275

[2] *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 4, p. 23

Luqmân Advises

Luqmân advised his son:

> "My son, sit knee to knee to scholars, but avoid arguing or disputing with them, for this might cause them to dislike you. Spend on yourself sufficiently in this life (without extravagance or tightwad), and give away from that you do not need in the way of your Hereafter. Do not refuse life's possessions, for if you do, you will end up dependant on other men and becoming a heavy burden on them. Fast, for fasting diminishes the lures of desire, but do not fast excessively so that you do not become too weak to pray. Verily, praying is better than fasting. Do not associate with the fools or those who have two faces (or hypocrites)."[1]

In contrast to the righteous advice Luqmân gave his son, many Muslims ignore rearing their children according to Islamic principals and neglect the significance of advising and directing them. Instead, they dedicate their attention to feeding, clothing and entertaining their children! Consequently, many children in the present time knowing very little about the religion, fall into disallowed actions and statements, without being forbidden from doing so, and are not being made aware of their errors and mistakes. Rather, some parents even help their children commit sins! As a result, today's young people often fall prey to confusion as to what is allowed or disallowed for them and what they should or should not do or say.

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[1] *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 4, p. 58

As for our righteous ancestors, they used to follow their children with their eyes and walk besides them, teaching, advising, directing and righteously rearing them. This is why their children were the comfort of their eyes, the relief of their hearts and the essence and core of their *Ummah* (the Muslim Nation). They advised and taught their children such aspects of *Birr* towards parents as these wise words that came from Ibn Muhayriz: "He who walks in front of his father, will have fallen into *'Uquq* of him, unless he walks in front of him for the purpose of removing harm from his way. Also, he who calls his father by his name or title (such as Abu Muhammad...) will have fallen into *'Uquq* of him. Instead, he must address him by, 'Father.'"[1]

Furthermore, Farqad advised that children, no matter how old they get, should not look their parents straight in the eye, walk in front of them, speak first when they are present, or walk to the right or left of them, unless they make such a request. Rather, children should walk behind their parents, just as a servant would do with his master.[2]

Allâh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَٱخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ ٱلذُّلِّ مِنَ ٱلرَّحْمَةِ وَقُل رَّبِّ ٱرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِى صَغِيرًا ﴾

[الإسراء: ٢٤]

> "And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.'" (17:24)

Therefore, dear Muslim, do not walk to your parents when

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1 *Al-Birr was-Silah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 113

2 *Al-Birr was-Silah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 113

they call you, but rather fly to them as birds do, in that, you rush to answer their call and fulfilll whatever they order you, so that you might earn their pleasure. And even if you do all this, you will never be able to perfectly fulfilll their rights on you, and this is why you should add to your vigor in serving them by invoking Allâh to grant them His Mercy and forgiveness.

In short, when you walk along with your parents, walk behind them not in front of them, yet act as if your parents are a piece of you, not letting anyone separate between you and them. You should also admit that children are not their parents' equals, and neither reside above them in dwelling nor speak before them in any audience. Children should admit that they owe their very life to the kindness and generosity of their parents. On the other hand, Islam requires parents to be a good example themselves for their children. Sadly, there are many parents who neglect praying, ignore performing the various acts of worship and commit illegal acts! How can this type of people ever be a good example for their children, or even attempt to command them to do good and refrain from evil? How can this type be worthy of rearing their children in righteousness in this environment?

In contrast, the Companions have always set a good example for their children, by being righteous themselves and by teaching them righteous conduct. There was no contradiction between what the Companions did or stated in public and what they taught their children at home by way of example. For instance, Abdullah bin 'Umar رضي الله عنهما narrated, "Whenever 'Umar would ask the people to refrain from something, he would go to his family, gather them and declare, 'I have barred the people from such and such things, and people look up to you just as birds look to

pieces of meat; if you fall on it, they will follow suit! But, if you stay away from it, they will not fall. By Allâh! Any of you who breaks my order to the people and is brought to me, then I will double his punishment because of his relation to me. So, whoever among you wants to come forward or take a step back, let him do so!'"[1]

During the illness that preceded the death of Caliph 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz, his cousin Maslamah bin Abdul-Malik visited him and said:

> "O Chief of the Faithful! You have made your children poor and left them with nothing. Why do you not make me or another of your relatives to take care of them?" 'Umar asked to be helped to sit up and then said, "As for your statement that I made them poor, by Allâh! I did not prevent them from money that they deserved, nor have I given them what is not allowed for them. As for your request that I appoint you or another of my relatives as caretakers of my children, then know that their Caretaker on my behalf is Allâh, Who sent down the Book, and He is the Supporter of the righteous. As for my children, if they are righteous and have fear from Allâh, then Allâh will make a way out for them from every difficulty. Otherwise, if any of them persists in sin, then I will not help him commit more sin. Verily, I invoke Allâh for a good return to the Hereafter, for this life is transient and by no means eternal."[2]

(We should mention that the offspring of 'Umar bin

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1 *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol. 4, p. 219

2 *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 5, p. 333

Abdul-Aziz were righteous as he hoped, and even though he did not leave them much wealth, Allâh helped and supported them. They had money and wisdom concerning how to spend their wealth, so much so, that their cousins from the Umayyad family used to borrow money from them.)

Al-Ahnaf bin Qais describe that Yazid bin Mu'âwiyah said:

> "My father (Caliph Mu'âwiyah) summoned Al-Ahnaf bin Qays and asked him, 'O Abul-Hasan! What do you say about children?' Al-Ahnaf said, 'O Chief of the Faithful! They are the fruit of our hearts and the pillars of our backs, while we are like a paved land and a sheltering sky for them. We rely on their support against every difficult matter. If they ask, give; and if they get angry, help them get over it. This way, they will be affectionate with you and love you as much as they can. Do not be like a lock with them (i.e. very strict), so that they will not get bored with your life, long for the day you die and dislike nearness to you.' Mu'âwiyah said, 'By Allâh! Before you came, I was very angry with Yazid.'"[1]

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1 *Al-Barakah fi Fadl As-Sa'i wal-Harakah*, p. 97

How do people treat their parents in the present time

In the present time, neglecting parents has become the norm, especially when they grow old and become dependant on their children, or on their meager resources, if they have any. When this occurs, their children visit them less occasionally, if they do not place them in old people's homes to rid themselves of the burden of taking care of them. Talking harshly and rudely to parents, speaking to them with a loud voice, showing discomfort and boredom towards the least requests from them, complaining from the burden they represent and even wishing they would die, have all become so common among people that you would think that their parents were the enemy! It is even more amazing to see some Muslims deal kindly with *Kuffâr*, unlike the harsh, ill-mannered way they speak to and deal with their parents. Moreover, many Muslims think more highly of their friends than of their own parents. *'Uquq* has become so rampant in the present time, that it makes the heart bleed when compared to the way our *Salaf*[1] used to treat their parents.

It was reported that when Nasr bin Abu Hafith Al-Maqdisi traveled from Jerusalem to Mayyafaraqain, in Iraq, to learn with Al-Kazaroni, the well-known scholar. Al-Kazaroni asked him, "Is your mother alive?" Nasr said, "Yes." Al-Kazaroni asked, "Have you taken her permission?" Nasr said, "No." Al-Kazaroni said, "By Allâh! You will not

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The *Salaf* are the Companions, the *Tabi'in* (second generation) and the *Tabb'-Tabi'in* (third generation of Islam), the best people as the Prophet ﷺ described them in authentic *Ahadith*.

learn with me until you go back to her, so that her anger at you ends." Nasr went back to his mother and remained with her until she died, then traveled to collect knowledge.[1]

Furthermore, Hishâm narrated that Hafsah used to invoke Allâh for her son Huthayl, who would dry sugar cane in summer, for if it is dried it becomes smokeless, and when it was winter, would use it as firewood for his mother. He would sit behind his mother while she prayed, light the fire, and his mother would not be bothered by the smoke, yet be comforted with the heat it produced. When he died, Hafsah felt very sad, until one night she stood up in prayer and recited this *Âyah*:

﴿ مَا عِندَكُمْ يَنفَدُ وَمَا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ صَبَرُوٓا۟ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ [النحل: ٩٦]

> "Whatever is with you, will be exhausted, and whatever is with Allâh (of good deeds) will remain. And those who are patient, We will certainly pay them a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do." (16:96)

Hafsah overcame her sadness (and observed patience) when she recited this *Âyah.*[2]

Scholars of the *Salaf* obeyed their parents, even while teaching religious knowledge

For instance, Abu Bakr bin 'Ayyâsh said:

> "I used to sit with Mansur (a scholar) in his house and would hear his mother, who was loud and rude, shout at him, 'O Mansur! Ibn Hubairah (governor of

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1 *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 82

2 *Al-Birr was-Silah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 53

Iraq during that time) appointed you to the post of judge, but you refused.' Mansur would not even look her in the eye out of respect.'"[1]

And when Haywah bin Shurih, a scholar, used to sit teaching people, his mother would sometimes say to him, "O Haywah, feed the chickens some barley," and he would leave his audience, obey his mother then resume giving the lecture[2]! Furthermore, Muhammad bin Al-Munkadir, another scholar, said that one night his brother 'Umar spent the night praying while he spent it holding his mother's feet (to make her warm). Muhammad commented that he would prefer what he did to spending the night praying like 'Umar.

In contrast, I was told that a man placed his mother, with whom he was harsh and disrespectful, in an old people's home and did not visit her even once afterwards. When her health deteriorated, she asked the manager of the home to invite her son to visit her, so that she could see him before she dies. However, the sinner son of *'Uquq* 'declined the invitation.' When she died, he was contacted and told that his mother died, but he simply commented, "Just complete the paperwork and bury her in her grave."

How many are they who bring tears to their parents' eyes and cause them sleeplessness? How many are they who make their parents worried and anxious, especially when they abandon them and do not visit them often? How many are they who when they become young men and women, terrorize their parents and bring tears of fear to their eyes? How many are they who treat their parents with

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1 *Al-Birr was-Silah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 85

kindness and mercy, just as the parents used to be kind and forbearing with them when they were young? Is it not true that parents are the allies of hardship, sadness, anxiety and depression, fearing for their children when they were young and from them when they grow up? How many are they who, upon reaching the age of responsibility, abandon their parents either to reside in another area, away from them, or travel for no pressing necessity? They abandon their crying parents and cause them to miss looking at the dearest faces to them. However, they will keep thinking about their children and remember them in their hearts, even though they no longer hear their words or see their faces. Even when one departs for his job by day or night, his parents feel emptiness in their hearts and sometimes cry. What will they feel if they close the outside door realizing that their son will not come back any time soon, glancing into his empty room and feeling sad for losing the joy of his company and the comfort of his presence? Crying will then be their resort, tears will provide them with shelter, and humbleness and sadness will be their refuge. And if they meet their absent son's friends and peers and do not see him among them, their hearts will feel grief and will dissolve in pity.[1]

A man said to Ibrahim bin Adham:

> "Tuba (a tree in Paradise) for you, for you have dedicated your life to worshipping Allâh." (i.e., you do not have children to take care of.)

Ibrahim replied:

> "Rather, one worry (or hardship) you endure that is connected to rearing your children, is better than

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[1] *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 116

what I am doing." [1]

We thank and praise Allâh that parents earn rewards for rearing their children and worrying about them, and indeed, all the favors and bounties come from Allâh.

Teach your Children the Love of Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ

Just as seeds need water, care and nourishment to grow up to be trees that bear good fruits, children need nourishment and religious teachings to grow up to be strong, righteous and knowledgeable. Consequently, every parent is required to plant the seed of loving Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ, *Tauhid* (Islamic Monotheism) and *Lâ ilâha illallâh* (none has the right to be worshipped except Allâh) in his or her children's hearts, and to feed them on piety, obedience and good conduct. Parents are also required to make the way of life they and their children adhere by conform to, "Allâh said...", and "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said..."[2]

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1 *Al-Ihyâ'*, vol. 2, p. 27

2 *Rasâ'il ila Ummi wa Ukhti*, p. 9

Warning against *'Uquq* towards Parents

Mu'âdh narrated, "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ ordered me:

«لَا تَعُقَّ وَالِدَيْكَ وَإِنْ أَمَرَاكَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ وَمَالِكَ».

'Do not fall in *'Uquq* towards your parents, even if they order you to forfeit your family and wealth.'" (*Ahmad* and *At-Tabarâni*)

Furthermore, the son of Abdullah bin 'Umar رضي الله عنهما narrated that his father Abdullah said:

"I married a wife that 'Umar رضي الله عنه disliked and he ordered me to divorce her, but I refused. So 'Umar went to the Prophet ﷺ and told him and the Prophet said, 'Obey your father.'" [1] (*Ahmad* and *Abu Dâwud*)

Abu Ad-Dardâ' narrated that a man came to him and said that his mother ordered him to divorce his wife, and Abu Ad-Dardâ' replied, I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ saying:

«الْوَالِدُ أَوْسَطُ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَأَضِعْ ذٰلِكَ الْبَابَ أَوِ

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[1] We should mention that some scholars said that if one's parents are not knowledgeable in Islam and order someone to divorce his wife, their order should be implemented if what they command is righteous itself and not for a desire the parents wish to fulfil, such as getting rid of a religious wife who is dutiful to her husband. Therefore, in this case, the demand of parents of their son to divorce his wife should be examined to make sure that it is not a result of ignorance, biases against religious women, or any other lust or desire that the parents might have. When the parents are righteous and knowledgeable, such as 'Umar was, for instance, their son should prefer their pleasure to his own and their order to his own comfort. Allâh knows best.

احفظه».

"The parent is the middle (the best) among the doors of Paradise, so lose that door or protect it.'" (*At-Tirmidhi*)

This *Hadith* states that *'Uquq* against the parents will incur the loss of the middle and best door in Paradise, while being kind to them preserves that door. Therefore, he who seeks eternal happiness should seek this door's way, even if it meant forfeiting his comfort and desire. As for those who sell the Hereafter for this life, prefer this world to the Everlasting Dwelling and seek the short-lived lust instead of the eternal delight, they will not worry if that door is lost from them.

If the wife whom the parents are demanding their son to divorce is wicked or disobedient, then it is more incumbent on him to divorce her in this case. Once, a Bedouin man divorced his wife because she refused to keep for his mother, the best part of a camel he slaughtered. She insisted on giving her the worst part that did not carry much meat or fat. So he said to her, "Then take the meat and go back to your family with it!" This is the example of the unsuitable wife who will increase in wickedness if her husband becomes more dutiful to her. Being patient with such a wife will not avail much, for patience only increase her in meanness and stubbornness, just as the dry branch, you need to cut it out before it brings death and dryness to the rest of the tree. All Muslim women should therefore heed this advice and take righteous wives as their example, such as the Prophet's wives and his female Companions, may Allâh reward them with Paradise. Let them think about their mother-in-law as they think of their own mother, and treat the mother-in-law

the way they would want their mother's daughter-in-law to treat her.

O you who practice *'Uquq*, hear this!

O you who has ignored the most important rights, who preferred *'Uquq* to *Birr* towards your parents, who forgot their duties and turned away from the remembrance of the fate that will touch them in the future! Know that fulfillling the requirements of *Birr* towards your parents is a debt that you have to pay, even though you pretend otherwise. How can you fall into *'Uquq* towards your parents, yet claim that you seek Paradise, which is below the feet of your mother, who carried you for nine months, but seemed like nine years, and experienced indescribable hardships when she delivered you? She nursed you, took care of you, cleaned you with her own hands, preferred you with food, held you in her lap and showed mercy and affection to you, especially when you fell ill, in which case she felt sad, cried and took you to the doctor whom she paid to heal you. If she was given the choice between your life or hers, she would willingly and gladly choose your life and her demise. All this she did, yet, you treat her badly, even though she invokes Allâh in public and secret to direct and guide you to the best. When she needed you after she became old, you made her the least important thing to you; you ate when she was hungry and drank when she was thirsty, and you preferred your family, children and friends to her. You forgot her favors on you and felt the heaviness of her easy to fulfilll requests! You thought that she lived for a long time, even though her life was short, and avoided seeing her, even though she had no supporter except you. How can you do all this, when your Lord has forbidden you from even saying *Uff'* to her? Surely, you will be recompensed for this *'Uquq* in this life

by being dealt the same by your own children, and in the Hereafter by being outcast from the Lord of the worlds. Hear Allâh's words that convey to you His admonishment and blame:

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴾

[آل عمران : ١٨٢]

"This is because of that (evil) which your hands have sent before you. And certainly, Allâh is never unjust to (His) slaves." (3:182) [1]

When Abdullah bin 'Abbas رضي الله عنهما was asked about the people of *Al-A'râf*, he said:

"*Al-A'râf* is a mount between Paradise and the Fire. It was called *Al-A'râf* because it overlooks Paradise and the Fire, and it has trees, fruits, rivers and springs. Those who will be kept at *Al-A'râf* include some men who joined the *Jihâd* without permission from their fathers and mothers and were martyred in *Jihâd*. Their death in the Cause of Allâh qualified them to be saved from the Fire, but their disobedience to their parents prevented them from entering Paradise. They will remain at *Al-A'râf* until Allâh decides in their case." [2]

Practice *'Uquq* towards your parents and your children will do the same to you

It was reported that a man was so bad with his father that he used to pull him by the leg to the door and throw him out of his house. Allâh gave that man a son who was

1 *Al-Kabâ'ir*, p. 44

2 *Al-Kabâ'ir*, p. 41

worse to him than he was to his father, for he used to pull him by the leg to the street. When the son reached the door, his father said to him, "Stop here for I used to pull my father by the leg up to the door," and his son replied, "This is your recompense for what you did (to your father) and the increase is a gift from me!" This story demonstrates that recompense for one's actions also occurs in this life. Therefore, one should treat his parents in the same manner he hopes his children would treat them, not as a material way of receiving payment for good actions, but seeking the good pleasure and rewards of Allâh Alone in sincerity.

Unlike money, which many consider the prize to earn in this life, earning your parents' pleasure is the prize that will be kept for you in this life and the Last Life. The parent is just like a tree that you take shelter under its shade, a refuge to resort to, a sharp sword that protects you, a caretaker who defends you and an experience that you could use for wisdom concerning the various affairs of life. When you lose your parents, you will have lost all these bounties, and indeed, many times one does not know the value of what he has but after losing it.[1]

The *Salaf* knew these facts and were dutiful to their parents, as this story demonstrates. Mu'âwiyah bin Qurrah was asked about his son and he said:

> "What an excellent son, he took care of my life affairs for me and that allowed me to concentrate on matters of the Hereafter." [2]

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1 *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Al-Hinawi, p. 103

2 *Hilyatul-Auliyâ'*, vol. 3, p. 124

Statements of the Prophet ﷺ concerning *Birr* and *'Uquq* towards parents

No child can ever pay back his debt to his parents, except in the case that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ mentioned:

«لَا يَجْزِي وَلَدٌ وَالِدَهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَجِدَهُ مَمْلُوكًا فَيَشْتَرِيَهُ فَيُعْتِقَهُ».

"No child can pay back his parents (favors), unless he finds that his father is a slave, so he buys him and sets him free." (*Muslim*)

Moreover, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ warned against *'Uquq* towards parents, when he said:

«ثَلاثَةٌ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَعَهُنَّ عَمَلٌ: الشِّرْكُ بِاللهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَالْفِرَارُ مِنَ الزَّحْفِ».

"Three acts will render one's deeds useless: associating others with Allâh, *'Uquq* towards parents and fleeing from battle." (*At-Tabarâni*)

Furthermore, Mu'âwiyah bin Jahimah As-Sulami said that his father went to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ and said to him, "O Allâh's Messenger! I wish to participate in *Jihâd*, so what do you recommend?" The Messenger ﷺ asked him if his mother was still alive and he said, "Yes." The Messenger ﷺ said:

«الْزَمْهَا فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ عِنْدَ رِجْلَيْهَا».

"Remain with her, for Paradise is under her feet." (*Ahmad* and *An-Nasa'î*)

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said to him, "O Allâh's Messenger! I came to give you my pledge of *Bai'ah* to

perform *Hijrah,*[1] but I left my parents behind while they were crying for me."

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«ارْجِعْ فَأَضْحِكْهُمَا كَمَا أَبْكَيْتَهُمَا»

"Then go back to them and make them laugh, just as you made them cry."

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«لَا أُبَايِعُكَ حَتَّى تَرْجِعَ إِلَيْهِمَا فَتُضْحِكَهُمَا كَمَا أَبْكَيْتَهُمَا»

"I will not accept the *Bai'ah* from you until you go back to them and bring laughter to them, as you made them cry." (*Al-Bukhâri* and *Abu Dâwud*)

When children dedicate sufficient time to the service of their parents, obey them and fulfilll their duty towards them, especially the mother, they will earn Allâh's Pleasure and enter Paradise. Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'Aas narrated, "A man came to the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ and said, 'I give you my pledge of *Bai'ah* that I will perform *Hijrah* and *Jihâd* seeking the reward of Allâh.' The Prophet ﷺ asked him, 'Are any of your parents still alive?' He said that both of them were alive. The Prophet ﷺ asked him, 'Do you seek Allâh's reward?' The man said, 'Yes.' The Messenger ﷺ said:

«فَارْجِعْ إِلَى وَالِدَيْكَ فَأَحْسِنْ صُحْبَتَهُمَا»

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[1] Its means migrate to Al-Madinah, where the Islamic State concentrated, before Allâh allowed His Messenger ﷺ to conquer Makkah, and as a consequence, the rest of Arabia fell under his control. Before these victories, Muslims were required to migrate to Al-Madinah and join ranks with the Messenger ﷺ and his Companions in it.

> 'Then go back to your parents and be dutiful to them.'"

Therefore, the reward that you seek from Allâh does not come only through *Hijrah* and *Jihâd*, but there is another job that will earn you the reward and bounty that you seek. Only you can do this job, which is especially suited for you: go back to your parents and fulfilll your duty towards them, exert yourself in their service, obey what they order and bring pleasure to their hearts, for this indeed is better for you than *Jihâd*. (This type of *Jihâd* is not required from every Muslim.)

Bishr bin Al-Hârith said:

> "It is better for a man to be beside his mother where she can hear his breath than for him to use his sword for the sake of Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored. Verily, attending the needs of the mother is better than any other good deed." [1]

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[1] One can certainly find sufficient time to take care of his parents, attend to their needs, respect them, talk to them, support them financially and emotionally, and rear his children to love them and be around them. It is a fact of life that grandchildren are more dear to their grandparents than their own children. Also, one can always consider this a pleasant time he spends with his mother and father, listening to their stories, conversing to them about family and life affairs, asking for their advice, loving them and showing them affection and pleasure. How can this be considered difficult or burdensome, when the parents are the dearest persons to one's heart, the shelter that he resorts to when he is sad and depressed, and the treasure that will always keep the secrets and happy moments for the child. We certainly have ample time to do so, before it is too late when one looks at the chair that his mother or father used to recline on or the bed they used to sleep in but does not find their loving face or hear their affectionate voice.

Some scholars suggested that even if one leaves his parents during a necessary journey, he should invoke Allâh to forgive him for the time he will spend away from them. Indeed, Islam strikes perfect balance between one's duties with regards to praying, fasting, and other acts of worship, as well as, social duties that include being dutiful, keeping relations and visiting relatives, especially parents, and neighbors. The unique word '*Ibâdah* encompasses all that Allâh loves of statements, actions, and apparent and secret deeds.

To continue on the subject of *Birr* towards parents, we should mention that 'Ata said that if one's mother insists that he only performs the compulsory prayer and fasts during Ramadân, he should obey his mother. Further, Hishâm bin Hassan said:

> "I said to Al-Hasan, 'I learn the Qur'ân, and my mother keeps waiting for me with dinner until I come back.' Al-Hasan said, 'It is better for you to eat dinner with your mother, so that her heart is comforted, than to perform a voluntary *Hajj*.'"[1]

We should also assert that righteous parents also help their children perform *Birr* towards them. For instance, Abu Al-Laith said:

> "A righteous man used to be conservative in his orders to his son, fearing that he might not obey him and thus earn Hell-fire."[2]

Nowadays, the perfect balance that Islam has set has been upset by many young men and women concerning their parents. They show boredom, displeasure and discomfort with their parents whenever they can. They raise their

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1 *Birr-ul-Wâalidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 45

2 *Al-Barakah fi Fadl As-Sa'i wal-Harakah*, p. 97

voices at their parents and do not answer their call or attend to their needs. They do all this, and much more, not because they are unable to fulfilll the duty of *Birr* towards their parents, but rather, because their hearts have become hard as a consequence of being away from Allâh's religion and Commandments. This type of people will not hesitate to obey if a friend of theirs orders them to do something, because they value and prefer their friends to their own parents! It is for this type of 'children' we present this *Hadith*, that Al-Hâkim collected:

«كُلُّ الذُّنُوبِ يُؤَخِّرُ اللهُ مِنْهَا مَا شَاءَ إِلىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا عُقُوقَ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، فَإِنَّهُ يُعَجِّلُ لِصَاحِبِهِ».

> "Allâh delays the punishment for whatever sins He will until the Day of Resurrection, except the punishment for *'Uquq* towards parents, for He rushes its recompense (in this life)."

Furthermore, Ka'b Al-Ahbâr said:

> "Allâh will bring a quick end to the life of a slave who is not dutiful to his parents, so that this slave receives his due punishment soon. Also, Allâh extends the life of a slave, if he is dutiful to his parents, so that this slave increases in *Birr* and piety."[1]

Mothers bear their Children in hardships after hardships

The mother suffers difficulties and hardships in the rearing of her children, from the time the offspring was kept in her womb after conception, until she departs this world! She carries her child in her womb, and the fetus gains in weight and livelihood everyday, becoming heavier near the

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[1] *Al-Kabâ'ir*, p. 41

full term of the pregnancy. The fetus soon starts to move in her womb, turning around and causing heaviness on her and leaving little time for her to rest. Even though this causes fatigue for the mother, if the fetus stops moving, the mother gets worried for its safety and rushes to the midwife or female doctor to examine her fetus! When the doctor calms her fears concerning her fetus' safety, she becomes happy and relieved. Day after day, the fetus gains in weight inside her body and causes her belly to swell, and this brings more pain and discomfort to her.

When the ninth month starts and it is time for the fetus to depart its mother's womb for this world, a momentous time starts for the mother, as if the baby neither wishes to stay in her womb, nor depart it for this world. Sometimes, it is necessary to operate on the mother to extract the baby from her womb, especially when there is a race to save her life as well as the life of her fetus. Many women die while delivering their babies.[1]

This is one reason why Islam emphasizes the rights of the mother more than the rights of the father, due to the difficulties and hardships the mother endures throughout her life as a mother until she dies. No matter how old her children become, the mother still looks after them and considers them to be her 'babies'.

Where are We from these righteous People?

Az-Zubair bin Hishâm was known for his *Birr* and being dutiful to his father. During hot days, he would taste the water he brought and if he found it to be cold, he would prefer his father with it and send it to him to drink.[2]

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1 *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Al-Hinnawi, p. 78

2 *Al-Birr was-Silah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 82

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه used to carry his mother so that she answers the call of nature and bring her back when she is finished, after she became old and blind.[1]

Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما saw a man carrying his mother and going around the Ka'bah in *Tawâf* (circumambulation) and he asked Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه:

> "Have I fulfillled my duty towards her?" Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما replied, "Not even for one contraction! However, you have done good and Allâh will reward you tremendously for the little that you could do." [2]

Dear Muslim, if someone is generous with you once or twice, you would thank him and mention his good qualities at length! What about your parents, who might not receive any compliments from you, even though they were very generous with you for twenty or thirty years of your life, giving you food, clothes, affection and mercy? Surely, had Allâh not sternly outlawed *'Uquq* towards parents, it would still be a type of ill-mannerism and evil conduct. Furthermore, honorable people should and do prefer their parents to their friends, companions and children, and strive hard to repay a part of their tremendous debts on them, so that they earn Allâh's reward and bounties for *Birr* towards parents and good conduct.

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1 *Al-Birr was-Silah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 81

2 *Al-Kabâ'ir*, p. 42

Several Types of *'Uquq*[1]

1 – Causing grief and sadness to parents because of a statement or an action:

Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-'Aas رضى الله عنه narrated that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ to give him his pledge of allegiance, saying, "I have come to give you my *Bai'ah* to perform *Hijrah* (migration to Al-Madinah). However, I left behind my parents while they were crying."

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«فَارْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمَا فَأَضْحِكْهُمَا كَمَا أَبْكَيْتَهُمَا»

> "Then go back and make them laugh as you made them cry." (*Ahmad*)

Furthermore, Ibn Umar رضى الله عنهما said:

> "Bringing tears to parents is a part of *'Uquq* and a major sin." (*Al-Bukhâri*)

All praise is due to Allâh! How can anyone bring tears to his parents when the Prophet ﷺ required the man who wanted to migrate to Al-Madinah and participate in *Jihâd*, to go back to his parents and bring pleasure back into their hearts by his presence, as he made them cry by leaving them? These *Ahadith* indicate that Allâh has given parents many rights and raised high the importance of these rights. Allâh made acts of *Birr* with parents come before participating in *Jihâd*, as a mercy and bounty from Him. In reality, acts of *Birr* are also a type of *Jihâd*, for it incorporates using the body in the service of parents and spending money on them, and only those for whom Allâh has written all that is good and delightful can really satisfy

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[1] *Qadâ'-ud-Dain bi-Birril-Wâlidain*

and fulfilll this type of *Jihâd*.

2 – Practicing evil in front of Parents

It is not allowed to practice evil in front of parents. For instance, one cannot commit such evil as abandoning prayer, drinking, listening to musical instruments, watching indecent movies, looking at indecent magazines, and other types of immoral acts in front of parents.

These acts are a type of *'Uquq*, in that they make parents angry at their children, while Allâh has disallowed even saying the word *Uff* to them. Also, if parents agree with these acts by their children, they will earn evil deeds. Parents might be agreeable with their children in allowing these immoral acts out of love for them, and this way, one will be committing evil and luring his parents to it, leading them all to destruction. Moreover, scholars of *Tafsir* said that the *Âyah*:

﴿ وَأَمَّا ٱلْغُلَٰمُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَآ أَن يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَٰنًا وَكُفْرًا ﴾

[الكهف: ٨٠]

> "And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared lest he should oppress them by rebellion and disbelief." (18:80)

Also means, We feared that their love for him would lure them to follow his religion and evil ways.[1]

3 – Disowning and Abandoning Parents

Anas Al-Juhani said that his father narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِنَّ للهِ تَعَالَىٰ عِبَادًا لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَا يَنْظُر إِلَيْهِمْ»

[1] *Fath-ul-Qadir*, vol. 3, p. 304

"Verily, on the Day of Resurrection, Allâh has slaves to whom He will neither speak nor purify nor look at."

He was asked, "Who are they, O Allâh's Messenger?" He said:

«مُتَبَرِّىءٌ مِنْ وَالِدَيْهِ رَاغِبٌ عَنْهُمَا، وَمُتَبَرِّىءٌ مِنْ وَلَدِهِ، وَرَجُلٌ أَنْعَمَ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ فَكَفَرَ نِعْمَتَهُمْ وَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ».

"He who disowns and abandons his parents, he who disowns his children and he who was granted a favor by a people, but he denied their favor and disowned them." (*Ahmad*)

Also Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«لَا تَرْغَبُوا عَنْ آبَائِكُمْ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ».

"Do not disown your parents, for he who does that becomes a *Kâfir* (disbeliever)." (*Al-Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

We should assert that *'Uquq* against parents includes throwing them out of the house and committing them to old people's homes for the purpose of abandoning them and avoiding spending on them. This type forgets and denies all the favors and kindness that they received from their parents. However, let it be known that spending on parents and being dutiful to them, especially when they become old and weak, are Islamic obligations fulfillling which brings about Allâh's rewards, or otherwise punishment, in this life and in the Hereafter.

Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyyah was asked about a man who was struck by poverty and did not have the means to spend

on his wife and children, but had a wealthy son. Was it permissible for his wealthy son to spend on his father and young brothers and sisters? Ibn Taimiyyah answered:

> "All the thanks and praises are due to Allâh. In this case, the son is required to spend from his wealth on his father, step mother and young brothers and sisters. Rather, if he does not spend, he will be committing *'Uquq* against his father, cutting the relation of the womb and earning Allâh's punishment in this life and the Hereafter. Allâh has the best knowledge."[1]

The wealth that the offspring has, in fact belongs to his father, as this *Hadith* indicates:

A man said to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ that he had wealth and children, but his father wanted to use some of his wealth. The Messenger ﷺ replied:

«أَنْتَ وَمَالُكَ لأَبِيكَ» .

"You and your wealth are your father's." (*Ibn Mâjah*)

Also, Zur'ah bin Ibrahim said that a man came to 'Umar رضى الله عنه and said to him:

> "I have an old mother who is unable to go to answer the call of nature, so I carry her on my back. I also help her perform ablution while turning my face away from her (out of respect). Have I fulfillled my duty towards her?" 'Umar رضى الله عنه said, "No." The man said, "Even though I carry her on my back and exert myself in her service?" 'Umar رضى الله عنه said; "She used to do the same for you (when you were young) while hoping that you will live, as for you,

1 *Majmu' Al-Fatâwa*, vol. 34, p. 101

you await when she will go away (die)."[1]

4 – Preferring the wife to the mother and father is also a part of *'Uquq*, and this evil practice has become widespread in the present time. If preferring voluntary acts of worship to the mother or father earns one punishment, as demonstrated by the story of Juraij who continued in his voluntary prayer even though his mother called him, then what about what is less important? *'Uquq* becomes even worse in the case where one prefers his undutiful wife who tries her best to turn her husband away from his father and mother, so that he is hers alone! Such type of women would be outraged if her husband's mother or father had to live with them and causes many problems for her husband, trying to forbid him from being dutiful to his parents. This is one of the worst types of *'Uquq* there is.

5 - Refraining from visiting the parents often and from keeping regular contact with them are also types of *'Uquq*. Al-Bukhâri and Muslim narrated that Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللهُ عزَّ وَجَلَّ الْخَلْقَ، فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ مِنْهُ قَامَتِ الرَّحِمُ فَقَالَ: مَهْ. قَالَتْ: هَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِذِ بِكَ مِنَ الْقَطِيعَةِ. قَالَ: أَتَرْضَيْنَ أَنْ أَصِلَ مَنْ وَصَلَكِ وَأَقْطَعَ مَنْ قَطَعَكِ؟ قالَتْ: بَلَىٰ يَارَبِّ. قَالَ: فَذَلِكِ لَكِ».

"After Allâh completed the creation, the *Raham* (kinship) stood up and declared, 'This is the stand of she who is seeking refuge with You from being severed.' Allâh said, 'Does it please you that I keep ties to he who keeps your ties and sever he who severs your ties?' She said, 'Yes, O Lord!' Allâh

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[1] *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi

said, ‘You have that.’”

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه then said, “Read if you will:

﴿ فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَن تُفْسِدُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوٓا۟ أَرْحَامَكُمْ ﴾

[محمد : ٢٢]

“Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship?” (47:22)

The Companions knew the significance of keeping ties of kinship, as the *Hadith* emphasized, and strived hard to preserve these ties, especially with parents.

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه, for instance, lived in a house next to his mother and would stand at her door whenever he went out and say:

> “Peace be unto you, my mother, and Allâh’s mercy and blessings.” She would reply, “Peace be unto you and Allâh’s mercy and blessings.” Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه would say, “May Allâh grant you His Mercy for raising me when I was young,” and she would reply, “May Allâh grant you His Mercy for being dutiful to me when you grew up.” He would often repeat this statement when he went in or out. (*Al-Bukhâri*)

As we stated, it is a type of *‘Uquq* to look angrily at parents when one is upset, or consider oneself to be equal or better than his or her parents. Also, *‘Uquq* towards parents includes children being ashamed of being called to their fathers, out of arrogance, especially when the children are in noted social status and having wealth, while their parents are poor or not socially elevated. Refraining from spending on poor parents, forcing them in some cases to resort to courts so that the judge compels their children to spend on them, is also a type of *‘Uquq*.

Cursing parents is one of the worst types of *'Uquq* there is, and it includes one's cursing other people's parents, thereby prompting them to retaliate by cursing his or her parents. Sometimes, people retaliate by cursing the parents of those who transgress against them by beating, abusing or backbiting. Satan erects a trap for one in this case and lures him to resort to cursing other people's parents in retaliation for the injustice he suffered, and one easily falls into this trap. One's wishing that his father or mother would die so that he could inherit their money, or to get rid of their burden if they were poor, or to "break free" from parents who are vigorous in rearing their children and directing them to righteousness, is also types of *'Uquq*. It is as if these children consider their parents a disease of a sort that they need to get rid of. We ask Allâh to grant us the best conduct, purify our hearts and guide us to the Straight Path.

There are several *Âyat* in the Qur'ân that command *Birr* towards parents together, and several other *Âyat* that command *Birr* towards the mother or the father, indicating Islam's great care concerning fulfillling the rights of parents and preserving their honor. For instance, Allâh said:

﴿ وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُۥ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَـٰلُهُۥ فِى عَامَيْنِ أَنِ ٱشْكُرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَيْكَ إِلَىَّ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴾ [لقمان : ١٤]

"And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years — give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination." (31:14)

The mother carries her child for nine months in weakness upon weakness until she gives birth, forgetting her pains

when she sees her child besides her after she delivers it. She sees the delight of life in her child and dedicates herself to his service, feeding, protecting, clothing, cleaning, until the weaning ends in two years. The mother keeps taking care of her child from the time he or she walks until the end of her life. This is why Allâh mentioned the mother first before the father with regards to obedience. Also there are several *Ahadith* on this subject, as follows:

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه said:

> جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: يَارَسُولَ اللهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟ قَالَ: «أُمُّكَ» قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: «أُمُّكَ» قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟قَالَ: «أُمُّكَ» قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ «أَبُوكَ»
>
> "A man came to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ and asked him, 'O Allâh's Messenger! Who among people deserves that I be most dutiful to?' He said, 'You mother.' He asked, 'Then?' The Messenger ﷺ said, 'Your mother.' He asked, 'Then?' The Messenger ﷺ said, 'Your mother.' He asked, 'Then.' The Messenger ﷺ said, 'Your father.'" (*Al-Bukhâri*)

This *Hadith* clearly indicates that the mother's share of one's kindness, service, obedience and *Birr*, as small compensation for her care and efforts, as being three times what the father deserves. The father also has a share, one- fourth as compared to the three-fourths the mother has, because he spends and rears his children, as well as, being the head of the house and the leader of the family. Ibn Battal said:

> "The mother suffers three types of hardships that the father does not: the hardship of pregnancy, delivering and nursing."

There is a great wisdom in preferring the rights of the mother, in addition to compensating her for the hardships

she suffers, for the mother needs to be taken care of since she is less able than man to earn her living. Therefore, who has more duty to be dutiful, serve and obey her than her own children? Al-Hasan Al-Basri said:

> "The father's right is greater, while *Birr* towards the mother is more obligatory."

To further emphasize the significance our *Salaf* placed on being dutiful to parents, especially to the mother, we should mention that 'Ali bin Al-Husain bin 'Ali رضى الله عنهم was once asked:

> "Among people, you have the most *Birr* towards your mother, but, we do not see you eat with her." He said, "I fear that she looks at the food and desires a part of it that my hand unwillingly takes before her, I fear I might commit *'Uquq* in this case."[1]

This answer came from a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ who was raised to feel *Birr* in his heart not by his words only. He knew the tremendous rights his mother had on him and reached such an exalted level in his *Birr* towards her that he would know what his mother thinks of and what she desires even before she speaks.

***Birr* is necessary to forward the Father**

If one's father becomes ill, would he or she abandon sleep and tend to the ill father, just as the father would do when his child falls ill? If the father is late coming from work, would his children worry about him as he does if they are late? On the contrary, many children show little care towards their fathers and commit errors against them, but fathers forget and forgive; and if a father invoked Allâh

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[1] *Al-Birr was-Silah*, p. 82

against his offspring by his tongue, his heart would surely follow it by invoking Allâh not to accept his invocation against his offspring.

Therefore, we present this reminder and advice to all those who have wisdom and sound comprehension: think about a person, who for twenty or more years was attending to your needs, hunger, thirst, illness, happiness, comfort and pleasure. If you become thirsty, he gives you something to drink; if you become ill, he brings you medicine; if you become sad, he strives to make you happy; and if you laugh, he feels happy for you. If you stand, he looks at you with eyes of pleasure, and he invokes Allâh for you often. How can you ever compensate this man, your father, for the tremendous service, care, kindness, mercy and affection that he gladly gave you? How can you be perfectly appreciative towards he who forsakes his own comfort and well-being for your sake, who grieves if you were ever hurt or even discomforted in any way? Ibrahim bin Dahah wrote to his father, "May Allâh make me sacrifice myself for your sake." His father wrote back, "Do not say this, for you will be more patient for my day than I for yours," meaning, "You will be more patient the day I die than I will be the day you die. My death will make you feel sad, but this sadness will fade away by the passage of time. However, your death will wound my heart, and the heart's wound never heals."

Virtues of *Birr* towards Parents

1 – *Birr* towards parents is one of the best righteous actions. Abdullah bin Mas'ud رضي الله عنه said:

سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ أَيُّ العَمَلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰ اللهِ؟ قَالَ : «الصَّلَاةُ فِي أَوَّلِ وَقْتِهَا». قُلْتُ : ثُمَّ أَيٌّ؟ قَالَ : «بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ». قُلْتُ : ثُمَّ أَيٌّ؟

قَالَ: «الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ»

"I asked the Prophet ﷺ, 'Which deed is the dearest to Allâh?' He replied, 'To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times.' I asked, 'What is the next (in goodness)?' He replied, 'To be good and dutiful to your parents.' I again asked, 'What is the next?' He replied, 'To participate in *Jihâd* in Allâh's Cause.'" (*Al-Bukhâri* and *Muslim*)

2 – *Birr* towards parents brings about Allâh's forgiveness. Allâh said:

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ إِحْسَٰنًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُۥ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُۥ وَفِصَٰلُهُۥ ثَلَٰثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُۥ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِىٓ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِىٓ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَىَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَىَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَىٰهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِى فِى ذُرِّيَّتِىٓ إِنِّى تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّى مِنَ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ ○ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا۟ وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَن سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ فِىٓ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ ٱلصِّدْقِ ٱلَّذِى كَانُوا۟ يُوعَدُونَ﴾ [الأحقاف: ١٥، ١٦]

"And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: 'My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my offspring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will).' They are those from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evil deeds.

among the dwellers of Paradise — a promise of truth, which they have been promised." (46:15,16)

3 – *Birr* towards parents earns one Allâh's Paradise. Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه narrated, "I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ say:

«رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ، رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ، رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ» قِيلَ: مَنْ يَارَسُولَ اللهِ؟ قَالَ: «مَنْ أَدْرَكَ وَالِدَيْهِ عِنْدَ الْكِبَرِ أَحَدَهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا ثُمَّ لَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ»

'Let his nose be stuck in dust! Let his nose be stuck in dust! Let his nose be stuck in dust!' He was asked, 'Who, O Allâh's Messenger!' He said, 'He who lives long until his parents or one of them become old, yet does not enter Paradise.'" (*Muslim*)[1]

4 – *Birr* towards parents earns a longer life. Anas bin Mâlik رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"He who likes to have his life term extended and his provisions increased, let him perform *Birr* towards his parents and keep relations with kith and kin." (*Ahmad*)

5 – *Birr* towards parents brings blessing to the wealth. Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُبْسَطَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ وَأَنْ يُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثَرِهِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ»

"He who is pleased to have his provision increased and his lifetime extended, then let him keep relations with kith and kin." (*Al-Bukhâri*)

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[1] Which indicates that *Birr* to parents is one of the ways and means that direct to Paradise.

I was told that a man used to be very poor and could not marry until he became thirty-two years old, even though he wanted to marry, because of extreme poverty. He was very dutiful to his mother and once carried her to *Hajj* on his back from Najd, in middle Arabia. Allâh later gave this man tremendous wealth and riches and he became known among people for his being wealthy and dutiful to his mother.

Birr towards parents after they die[1]

In *Sûrat Al-Isrâ'*, Allâh commanded that the parents are treated with kindness, obedience and respect, in addition to commanding children to admit to the favors and sacrifices their parents made and thank and appreciate them for all of this. Moreover, children are to remember their parents and often invoke Allâh to forgive them and bestow His Mercy on them:

﴿رَّبِّ ٱرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا﴾ [الإسراء: ٢٤]

> "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young." (17:24)

Furthermore, one should continue invoking Allâh for his parents after they die, for death brings an end to one's chances to perform good deeds in this life. However, the parents can increase their records of good deeds when their children provide them with the opportunity to do so. Death is a long of lonely journey that requires sufficient provisions, and only one of three qualities can make this journey easier, as the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ stated:

«إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ».

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[1] *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Al-Hinawi

> "If one dies, his deeds cease to increase except in three instances: through an ongoing charity, a knowledge that is benefited from and a righteous son who invokes (Allâh) for him." (*Muslim*)

Moreover, Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه said:

> "A dead person's grade becomes higher after his death and he asks, 'O Lord! Where did this come from?' Allâh replies, 'Your son has invoked (Me) to forgive you.'" (*Ibn Majah*)

Hence, invoking Allâh for forgiveness for parents, is one of the best good actions a Muslim could perform for his deceased parents:

﴿ رَّبِّ ٱغْفِرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَىَّ ﴾ [نوح : ٢٨]

"My Lord! Forgive me and my parents." (71:28)

And He said:

﴿ رَّبِّ ٱرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِى صَغِيرًا ﴾ [الإسراء : ٢٤]

> "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young." (17:24)

Allâh accepts one's supplication to Him for his or her parents, because it is a debt that is being repaid and an appreciation for a favor. Hence, Muslims should often invoke Allâh to forgive their parents, especially after they die, for parents then become in great need for kindness while in their grave and having tasted the hardship of recompense. At that time, the parents become sorry for every moment they wasted in their life and grieve because of the few good deeds they performed; they will only hope in Allâh's Mercy. So, when a good deed is added to their records because of their children, parents become as delighted and elated as when dead land receives rain.

Mâlik bin Rabi'ah As-Sâ'idi said: While I was sitting with the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, a man from *Al-Ansâr* came to him and asked, "O Allâh's Messenger! After my parents die, is there any type of *Birr* that I can perform towards them?" The Prophet ﷺ replied:

«نَعَمْ خِصَالٌ أَرْبَعٌ: الصَّلَاةُ عَلَيْهِمَا، وَالْاسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمَا، وَإِنْفَاذُ عَهْدِهِمَا، وَإِكْرَامُ صَدِيقِهِمَا، وَصِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ الَّتِي لَا رَحِمَ لَكَ إِلَّا مِنْ قِبَلِهِمَا، فَهُوَ الَّذِي بَقِيَ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ بِرِّهِمَا بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِمَا».

> "Yes, there are four qualities to perform: 1. Pray (to Allâh to grant them mercy) and invoke (Him) for forgiveness for them. 2. Fulfill their promises (or will). 3. Be generous to their friends. 4. Keep relations with the kindred, which are your kindred through your parents. This is what remains of the *Birr* that you could perform towards them after they die.'" (*Ahmad*, *Abu Dâwud* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

Therefore, the connection between one and his or her parents remains even after they die, by invoking Allâh to forgive them and grant them His Mercy, fulfillling their will and testament, honoring their friends and keeping relations with their relatives. This way, one gains Allâh's Pleasure and benefits his or her parents after they die, Allâh willing. Certainly, it is a part of honorable mannerism and good conduct that one remembers the favors he received from others and admits to them, especially and foremost the favors he received from his parents. Also, those who are generous towards whoever grants them favors, yet, still consider that they did not pay back the favor in full, are the most worthy among people of being dutiful and generous. This is especially true in the case of the children towards their parents, for they should always admit that they did not perfectly fulfill all aspects

of *Birr* towards them, admit to their inadequacy in this regard and declare their indebtedness to them forever.

Here are several examples of the exalted manner with which our *Salaf* remembered and appreciated their parents. When Umm 'Iyâs bin Mu'âwiyah died, he cried and was asked why. He said:

> "I had two doors open to Paradise, one of them was closed today."

Further, Rifâ'ah bin 'Iyâs said:

> "I saw Al-Hârith Al-'Ukli walking in his mother's funeral and crying. He was asked, 'Why do you cry?' He said, 'Why should I not cry, when a door to Paradise has been closed for me?'"

Moreover, Amir bin Abdullah bin Az-Zubair said:

> "For a year after my father died, all what I did was invoke Allâh to forgive him."[1]

Abdullah bin 'Umar رضي الله عنهما has also set a good example for us on how to be righteous children and honor our parents, their friends and relatives. Abdullah bin Dinâr narrated:

Abdullah bin 'Umar رضي الله عنهما passed by a man on the way to Makkah, greeted him and helped him ride the donkey he was riding. He also gave that man a turban he was wearing. I said to Ibn 'Umar, "May Allâh guide you, he is a Bedouin and they accept less than that." Abdullah bin 'Umar رضي الله عنهما said, "This man's father was a friend of 'Umar رضي الله عنه and I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ saying:

«إِنَّ أَبَرَّ الْبِرِّ صِلَةُ الرَّجُلِ أَهْلَ وُدِّ أَبِيهِ».

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[1] *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 78

'The best type of *Birr* is for a man to be generous to his father's friends.'" (*Sahih Muslim*)

We should also state that *Birr* towards parents includes visiting their graves, without traveling for this purpose.

Dear Brother and Sister!

Associate with righteous people and beware of taking as friends those who are unkind to their parents. Such friends are just like a mirage, an image without substance. Surely, those who commit '*Uquq* towards their parents and cut relations with their kin, should be disliked for Allâh's sake and not taken as friends. One should not be deceived by their soft words, for they are certainly not among the people of *Birr* who honor companionship or respect friendship.

A wise man once said:

> "Do not befriend whoever commits *'Uquq*, for he will never be faithful to your relation while he has committed *'Uquq* towards those who have more right on him than you have."[1]

Dear Young Men and Women, this is advice that Allâh has revealed to all of you from above seven heavens, and it is contained in His Book, the Qur'ân, and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger. Here are your parents next to you, they have grown old, their backs became bent and their limbs started to shake. They can hardly stand or sit, except with help. They have succumbed to illnesses and ailments. Therefore, adhere by the commandment of Allâh and the order of His Messenger ﷺ: be lenient and kind with your parents and preserve their rights on you. Kiss their heads and shed some tears in pity and affection for them, might that Allâh

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1 *Birr-ul-Wâlidain*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 63

grant them His Mercy and forgive you for inadequately preserving their right:

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ إِحْسَٰنًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُۥ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُۥ
وَفِصَٰلُهُۥ ثَلَٰثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُۥ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِىٓ أَنْ
أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِىٓ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَىَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَىَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَىٰهُ وَأَصْلِحْ
لِى فِى ذُرِّيَّتِىٓ إِنِّى تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّى مِنَ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ ○ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ
أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا۟ وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَن سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ فِىٓ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ ٱلصِّدْقِ ٱلَّذِى كَانُوا۟
يُوعَدُونَ﴾ [الأحقاف: ١٥، ١٦]

"And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: 'My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my offspring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will).' They are those from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evil deeds. (They shall be) among the dwellers of Paradise — a promise of truth, which they have been promised." (46:15,16)

O Allâh! Forgive us and our parents and grant them the best rewards on our behalf. O Allâh! Raise their grades, elevate their status and make whatever difficulties that befell them as erasers for their errors and elevation of their ranks. O Allâh! Grant them the Highest Paradise in the company of the Prophets, the Truthful Ones and the

martyrs, and what an excellent company.

Here are two examples of *Birr* towards Parents

1 -- Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"While three men were walking, rain began to fall and they had to take shelter in a cave in a mountain. A big rock rolled over and blocked the mouth of the cave. They said to each other, 'Invoke Allâh with the best good action you have performed (so that Allâh might remove the rock).' One of them said, 'O Allâh! My parents were old and I used to go out for grazing (my animals). On my return I would milk (the animals) and take the milk in a container to my parents to drink. After they had drunk from it, I would give it to my children, family and wife. One day I was delayed and on my return I found my parents sleeping, and I disliked to wake them up. The children were crying at my feet (because of hunger), until it was dawn. O Allâh! If You regard that I did it for Your sake, then please remove this rock so that we may see the sky.' So, the rock was moved a little. The second man said, 'O Allâh! You know that I was in love with a cousin of mine, like the deepest love a man may have for a woman, and she told me that I would not get my desire fulfillled unless I paid her one hundred dinars (gold pieces; she was suffering from poverty that year). So, I struggled for it until I gathered the desired amount, and when I sat in between her legs, she told me to be afraid of Allâh, and asked me not to deflower her except rightfully (by marriage). So, I got up and left her. O Allâh! If You regard that I did if for Your sake, kindly remove this rock.' Two-thirds of the

rock was removed. Then the third man said, 'O Allâh! No doubt You know that once I employed a worker for one *Faraq* (three *Sa'*, a measure pertaining to foods) of millet, and when I wanted to pay him, he refused to take it. So, I sowed it and from its yield I bought cows and a shepherd. After a time that man came and demanded his money. I said to him: Go to those cows and the shepherd and take them for they are for you. He asked me whether I was joking with him. I told him that I was not joking with him, and that all belonged to him. O Allâh! If You regard that I did it sincerely for Your sake, then please remove the rock.' So, the rock was removed completely from the mouth of the cave (and they went out of the cave walking)."

2 -- Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه narrated that Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said:

"There was an Israeli man called Juraij. While he was praying, his mother came and called him, but he did not respond to her call. He asked (himself) whether he should continue the prayer or reply to his mother. She came to him the second time, called him and said, 'O Allâh! Do not let him die until he sees the faces of prostitutes.' Juraij used to live in a hermitage. A woman said that she would entice Juraij, so she went to him and presented herself (for an evil act) but he refused. She then went to a shepherd and allowed him to commit illegal sexual intercourse with her and later she gave birth to a boy. She alleged that the baby was from Juraij. The people went to Juraij and broke down his hermitage, pulled him out of it and abused him. He performed ablution and offered the prayer, then he went to the

male baby and asked him, 'O boy! Who is your father?' The baby replied that his father was the shepherd. The people said that they would build for him a hermitage of gold, but Juraij asked them to make it of mud only." (*Al-Bukhâri* collected in his collection of authentic prophetic *Ahadith*, *Al-Jâmi' As-Sahih*)